

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 01130 061816Z
ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 ICAE-00 NSCE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7407
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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEBATE

1. SUMMARY: IN REMARKS IN PARLIAMENT ON NAMIBIA JUNE 5, FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA WAS NOTABLY NON-POLEMICAL AND EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SETTLEMENT. THE OPPOSITION URGED PATIENCE AND WARNED AGAINST PRECIPITOUS ACTION. (THIS REPORT IS BASED ON PRESS ACCOUNTS. OTHER ASPECTS OF BOTHA'S REMARKS ARE REPORTED SEPTEL.) END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE OPENING DAY OF THE PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEBATE, PIK BOTHA EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF AN INTERNATIONALLY
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PAGE 02 CAPE T 01130 061816Z

ACCEPTABLE SETTLEMENT IN NAMIBIA. IN WHAT THE OPPOSITION TERMED "A MODERATE AND REASONABLE TONE," BOTHA PREDICTED THAT IF SUCH A SETTLEMENT COULD BE ACHIEVED IN NAMIBIA, IT COULD HAVE A MREKED INFLUENCE ON SOUTH AFRICA'S RELATIONS WITH THE WEST AND MODERATE AFRICAN STATES. BOTHA SAID THAT BEFORE SOUTH AFRICA'S "CONSTRUCTIVE EFFORTS" ON THE QUESTION OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA'S INDEPENDENCE, AFRICAN HOSTILITY TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA HAS REACHED

"ALARMING PROPORTION." SINCE THEN, THE CLIMATE HAD CHANGED AND THERE WAS NOW A WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF MORE AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO VIEW SOUTH AFRICA'S POSITION WITH GREATER UNDERSTANDING. BOTHA STRESSED THAT ALL OF SOUTH AFRICA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS WERE STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN SOUTH WEST AFRICA AND RHODESIA.

3. COMMENT: NOTABLY ABSENT FROM BOTHA'S REMARKS ON NAMIBIA WERE ANY REFERENCES TO THE NEED FOR MOVING AHEAD WITH THE POLITICAL PROCESS, TO THE CASSINGA RAID, OR TO SWAPO'S INTRANSIGENCE. HE DID NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, MENTION RECENT NEWS REPORT WHICH HAVE BEEN PLAYED UP IN SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA THAT SWAPO'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAS REJECTED THE WESTERN PROPOSAL. DURING THE COMING WEEK'S DEBATE, BOTHA WILL VERY LIKELY RETURN TO THE SUBJECT OF NAMIBIA. POSSIBLY HE WILL USE THE OCCASION OF THE DEBATE TO ANNOUNCE THE DECISION TO MOVE AHEAD WITH REGISTRATION OF VOTERS.

4. OPPOSITION VIEW: SPEAKING DURING THE DEBATE, THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION PFP FOREIGN POLICY SPOKESMAN, JAPIE BASSON, SAID THAT SOUTH AFRICA SHOULD REFRAIN FROM TAKING UNILATERAL ACTION AT LEAST UNTIL THE WESTERN NATIONS COULD SAY FINALLY THAT THEIR INITIATIVE HAD BEEN A SUCCESS OR FAILURE. BASSON SAID THAT IN HIS OPINION THE NAMIBIAN SITUATION WAS STILL A LONG WAY FROM A FINAL SOLUTION. HE DID NOT THINK IT POSSIBLE FOR THE TERRITORY TO BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 CAPE T 01130 061816Z

GRANTED INDEPENDENCE BY THE END OF THEY EAR.

5. BASSON EXPHASIZED THAT ONE OF THE BIGGEST OBSTACLES TO FINDING A SOLUTION LAY IN THE LACK OF TRUST BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT PARTIES. THE DANGER OF TRYING TO FIND SCAPEGOATS FOR DELAY, HE SAID, SHOULD BE AVOIDED AS SHOULD ANY PRECIPITOUS ACTION WHICH COULD HARM THE NEGOTIATIONS. IT WAS UNFORTUNATELY TRUE, BASSON SAID, THAT THE SHARP CRITICISM AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA FOR ITS ATTACK ON SWAPO BASES IN ANGOLA HAD LET SWAPO OFF THE HOOK. BASSON DESCRIBED THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE WESTERN PROPOSALS AS PROBABLY THE MOST STATESMANLIKE ACTION OF THE NATIONAL PARTY GOVERNMENT IN ITS THIRTY YEARS IN POWER.

6. BASSON SAID IT WOULD BE BETTER TO USE THE ADDITIONAL TIME AVAILABLE TO CREATE A MORE FAVORABLE CLIMATE FOR ELECTIONS AND TO REMOVE THE REMAINING DISCRIMINATORY MEASURES. BUT THE BEST WAY SOUTH AFRICA COULD HELP SOUTH WEST AFRICA, HE CONCLUDED, WOULD BE TO BRING ABOUT POLITICAL CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF. EDMONDSON

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